

# Improving Access to Quality Health Information in Rural Communities through Little Free Libraries

Okeechobee County Library &  
University of Florida Health Science Center Libraries



# Project Team

## Presenters

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## Other Team Members

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Director, UF HSCL





# Collaborative Partnerships



SHOP ▾ BUILD ▾ REGISTER MAP ▾ PROGRAMS ▾ BOOKS STEWARDS ▾ GIVING ▾

## Registration Process



How to Register a Little Free Library



How to Add a Little Free Library to the World Map



<https://littlefreelibrary.org/registration-process/>



# Project Goal & Objectives

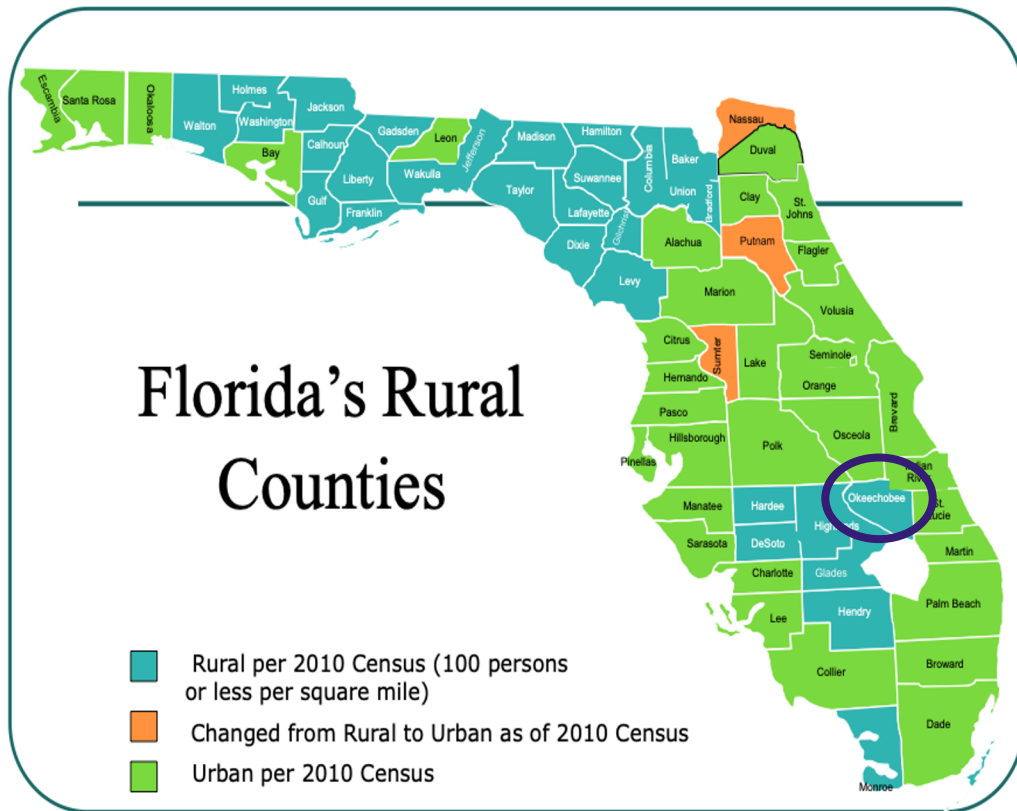
## Improve Okeechobee County residents' health literacy skills & promote participation in the All of Us Research Program by...

Adding 3 health information education components to the 30 LFLs

- Purchase/ print copies of consumer health materials, health literacy resources, and information on All of Us Research Program
- UF HSCL conducts train-the-trainer session for OCL to support health reference
- OCL and county Health Department consultants host weekly reference hours at LFLs on a rotating basis



# Okeechobee County, FL



- Rural, approximately 42,000 people
- 42% no internet, 22% live in poverty, 26% didn't graduate high school
- 11% identify as disabled, 20% elderly, estimated 5% LGBTQ+, 3000 veterans, 13% "foreign born"
- 26% Hispanic or Latinx, 9% Black or African American, 2% Indigenous American, 1% Asian
- 24% speak a language other than English at home

# County Health Needs

## Most popular health topics indicated by OCL's circulation data:

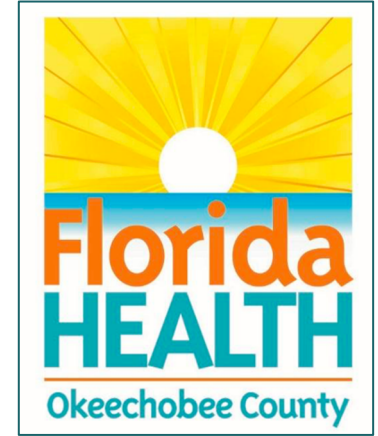
- Healthy eating, nutrition, cooking
- Chronic pain
- Anxiety, stress, mental health
- ADHD or ADD
- Menopause
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Smoking cessation
- Autism
- Cancer
- Heart Disease



# County Health Needs

## Community Health Improvement Plan, 2016:

- Health education priorities:
  - Nutrition, disease prevention, & navigating the healthcare system
- Public health concerns identified:
  - Depression, heavy drinking, stroke, COPD, emphysema or chronic bronchitis, diabetes, teenage births, obesity, lung cancer (relating to tobacco use), sexually transmitted diseases



# Priorities for Book Selections



## Language

English and Spanish



## Race/Ethnicity

African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic/Latinx, Indigenous Americans



## Other Diverse Identities

People with disabilities, LGBTQIA+, veterans, rural, caregivers



## Age Range

Children, Adolescents, Older Adults



## Reading Level

Pictures, infographics, plain language, grade level (where possible to tell)

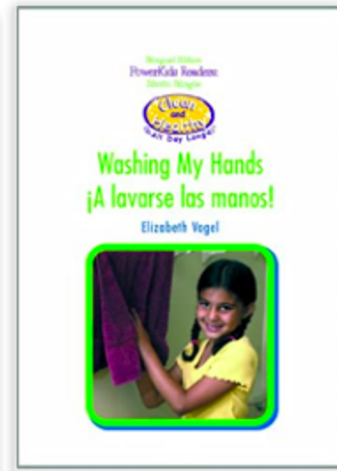


## Price

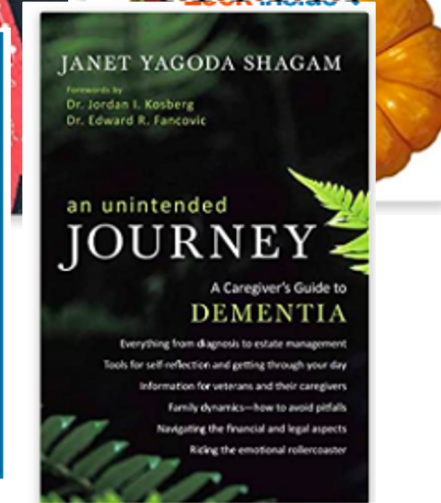
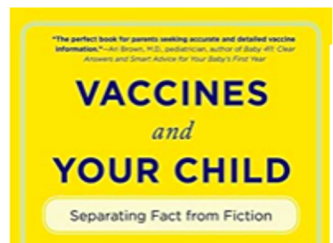
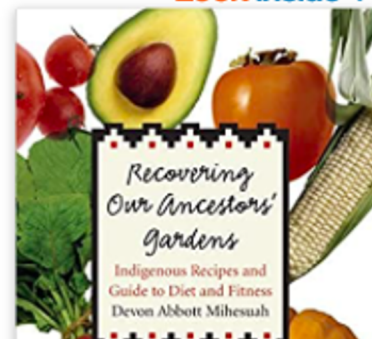
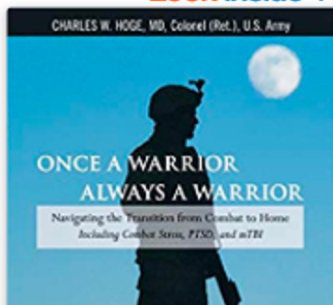
Maximum \$50 per book, lower priced materials were prioritized



# Print Books in Spanish



# Print Books for Diverse Audiences in English





# Online Resources Printed or Ordered

**BECAUSE LIBRARIES ARE PARTNERS IN A HEALTHY COMMUNITY.**

**NIH MedlinePlus** MAGAZINE

Trusted Health Information from the National Institutes of Health

SPRING 2009

**IN THIS ISSUE**

- At-home testing for HPV on the horizon
- 5 things you should know about intermittent fasting
- NIH breakthroughs in early autism diagnosis
- Tips for preventing Lyme disease this season

The next generation of medical technology

**Nonprescription medicines**

- Cold or cough medicines
- Aspirin or other pain relievers
- Allergy relief medicines
- Antacids
- Sleeping pills
- Laxatives
- Diet pills
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Medicines I should not take because of bad reactions or allergies \_\_\_\_\_

**Vitamins, herbs, and supplements**

- Vitamins (type) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Glucosamine chondroitin
- St. John's wort
- Ginkgo biloba
- Ginseng
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Medicine Wallet Card**

Show this card to your doctor or pharmacist. To print more copies, visit [www.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.nlm.nih.gov) and type "Your Medicine" in the search box.

My name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**EDUCATE before YOU MEDICATE**

National Council on Patient Education and Research  
[www.nepre.org](http://www.nepre.org)

**AHRQ**  
 Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality  
 Advancing Excellence in Health Care

**Prescription Medicines**

Name and how much medicine (example)	Color	What it is for	Date began taking	How to take and when
Tetracycline 250 mg	White	Respiratory infection	2/8/2011	1 tab 4 times 9 a.m. 5 p.m.

The more researchers know about what makes each of us unique, the more tailored our health care can become.

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**MedlinePlus**  
Trusted Health Information for You

[medlineplus.gov/espanol](http://medlineplus.gov/espanol)

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**That's a claim!**

Thinking critically about health claims

**BWARE** of claims

**THINK 'FAIR'** about the evidence

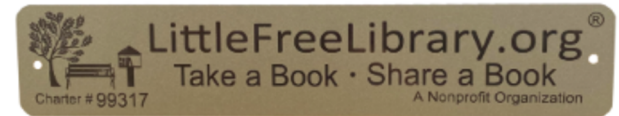
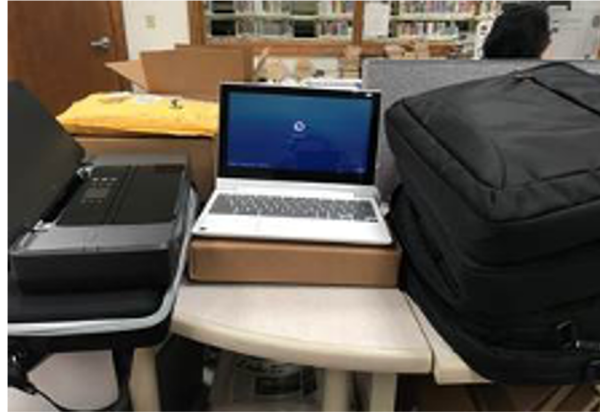
**TAKE CARE** when you decide

**BEWARE of claims:** Beware of claims that sound too good to be true, or that are based on anecdotal evidence or testimonials.

**THINK 'FAIR' about the evidence:** Look for evidence from scientific studies, especially those that are published in peer-reviewed journals.

**TAKE CARE when you decide:** Consider the source of the information, and whether it is likely to be biased or influenced by financial interests.

# Technology & Materials



# Training Day Overview

**Plan: 9am-12pm**



## Section 1

- Overview
- Opening Survey

## Section 2

- Health Literacy

## Section 3

- Consumer Health Resources
- Health Reference Interviews

# Training Day Overview

## Plan: 1pm-4pm

### Section 4

- Community Health Information Outreach
- Health Information Marketing

### Section 5

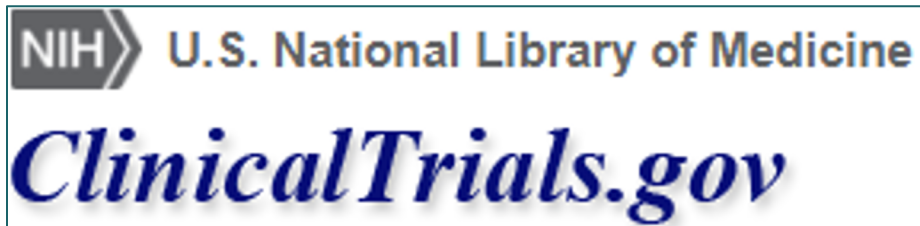
- Precision Medicine & Informed Consent
- All of Us & Citizen Science

### Section 6

- Closing Survey
- Wrap-Up



# NLM Resources Taught, plus All of Us



# eHEALS Instrument



I know what health resources are available on the Internet



I know how to use the health information I find on the Internet to help me



I know where to find helpful health resources on the Internet



I have the skills I need to evaluate the health resources I find on the internet



I know how to find helpful health resources on the Internet



I can tell high quality health resources from low quality health resources on the Internet



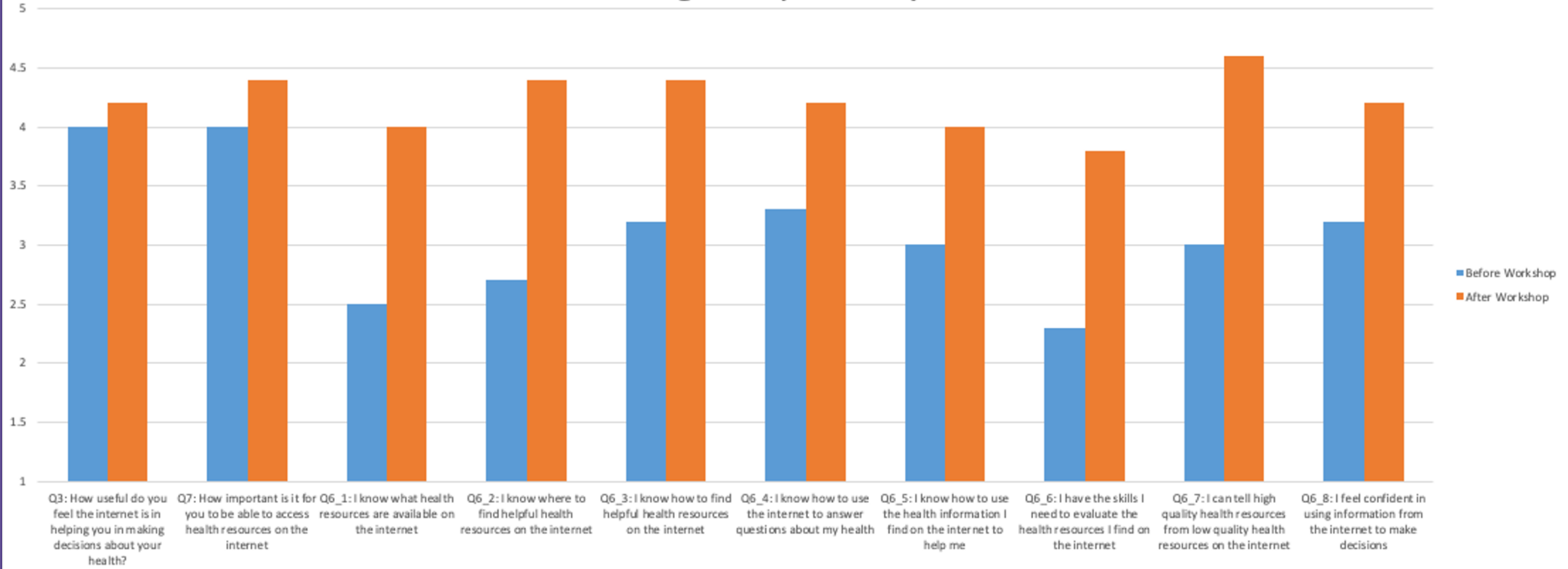
I know how to use the Internet to answer my questions about health



I feel confident in using information from the Internet to make health decisions



## Average Response by Question



<b>Key: 1 = Not useful at all; Not important at all; or Strongly disagree</b>
<b>2 = Not useful; Not important; Disagree</b>
<b>3 = Unsure; Unsure; Undecided</b>
<b>4 = Useful; Important; Agree</b>
<b>5 = Very useful; Very important; Strongly agree</b>

# eHEALS Results

**Average total score increased following workshop from 3.1 to 4.2**

# Virtual Health Reference & LFL Marketing



## NEED HEALTH RESOURCES? ASK A LIBRARIAN!

The Okeechobee Library can help you find print and digital resources for many of your health questions with our brand new health resource collection covering a wide range of health topics.



Call **863-763-3536** or email [okeechobee@myhlc.org](mailto:okeechobee@myhlc.org) to request a reference session. Provide your contact information and topic needed and a librarian will locate print and digital materials.



If you need further help, you can schedule a phone call or video chat to speak with a librarian personally.

The Okeechobee Library is not a health network and claims no medical expertise. Please seek professional help from your doctor or other health professionals for a medical diagnosis.



Above: Librarian Sonya Chaga and Director Krista King show off the Little Library that provides contact free curbside service to the public. Left: This Little Free Library located at Chobee Grocery is filled with free books for all ages.



When schools closed Wi-Fi locations were opened around Okeechobee to allow students who did not have Wi-Fi at home access to do their work. One public site included the Library where Wi-Fi was available. All children could keep up with their schoolwork and working people of all ages could have a secure Internet connection for all of their needs. Seeing the need for and value of this service, the Okeechobee Library recently purchased 20 "hot spots" which will be available to be checked out and taken home for Internet access, just like you would check out a book. This service should be in place by mid-summer. Sonya said, "This was a direct result of COVID. The Library realized it was a needed service, so we got it."

In cooperation with several organizations in Okeechobee, the Library was able to give away 100 boxes of food to needy families. The Library will continue, even after COVID-19, to be a school lunch distribution site for students.

As a result of COVID-19, the United States government had to push back the completion of the 2020 10-year census

to October 31 (which may be altered, yet again). Every Okeechobee citizen who can complete the census is vital to Okeechobee's economy for the next decade. Each person counted is worth \$16,000 of federal funds that support school lunches, health care, WIC, hospitals, parks, first responders, and of course, our Library!

To further help Okeechobee, another upcoming library service/technology soon to be offered was purchased through a partnership grant from the University of Florida Health Science Libraries, the Okeechobee Health Department, and the Okeechobee Library. It will allow library staff Internet access for "Virtual Library Service" anywhere in the county! This will help citizens who live in rural areas, as well as vulnerable populations who require social distancing or are technologically challenged in many ways, to be included in the census. Chief librarian and director Krista said, "We are so happy we have found ways to continue to expand our service to Okeechobee. We are also happy that our citizens know we are here to help. When we re-opened May 26th we couldn't have been happier. Though we were limited to how many could be inside at a given time, 112 people visited the Library, and that's without advertising that we were open."

Although 2020 has proven to be an unpredictable year that has brought many challenges, our Library is not only rising to these challenges but with the support of our community partners, is expanding service deeper into Okeechobee City and County. While our outreach services are just beginning, it will be exciting to see how much our Library can help our community in the coming year!



Okeechobee County Library

March 26 · 🌐

The Okeechobee Library is proud to announce that the first of our Little Free Libraries have been installed at [Okeechobee County Parks and Recreation Douglas Brown Community Center](#)! These Little Libraries will be available to the public 24/7.

Please be sure to pick up a book for yourself and your children when you pick up a free school lunch provided by [Okeechobee County Schools Food Service Program](#) Mon.-Friday, 11:00 - 12:30 at the Douglas Brown Community Center.

The Okeechobee Library also filled both the little pantry outside of [Chobee Grocery And Beauty](#) and the Little Library in Kiwanis Park with free books for the community.

All of these locations will be periodically restocked by the Library. So please feel free to take a book or leave a book!



4,127  
People Reached

519  
Engagements

Boost Post

👍❤️ 38

1 Comment 46 Shares



# Ongoing Project Evaluation

- Collecting patron health reference feedback through “Health Information Feedback Form”:  
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSchE8Hrhs2Ftu0RxqIx-nATkN9tQ5AuFjFwv3QAQOqStF3qww/viewform>
- Log is kept recording how often each LFL needs restocking and with which health materials

# Impact so far...

- 9 LFLs in low-income areas, 30 complete by July 2021. Most popular location so far is at a sports complex, with over 600 items circulated since installation in April 2020
- Most frequently restocked health materials are on teaching children healthy habits and how to manage emotions
- Rural residents' awareness of and access to authoritative health resources has already improved
- Temporary virtual health reference service in place. Once in-person is possible, residents will be further empowered to use quality information for health decision-making

# Future Plans

- In-person health reference sessions offered at LFLs when safe, collaborating with county health educators
- After 1 year, goal to establish permanent Wi-Fi hotspots at most popular LFLs and consistent outreach services
- Ongoing partnership between UF HSCL and OCL. Virtual and phone support for challenging health questions
- OCL partnership with local Rotary Club and Parks and Recreation to create a Story Walk for families



# Acknowledgements



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TAKE A BOOK • SHARE A BOOK

# Acknowledgements

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Southeastern/Atlantic Region

# THANK YOU!

Any questions? Please contact us:

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